

Prayer and Preaching, the great Duties of Ministers of the Gospel.

A
S E R M O N

Preached at the
Opening of the SYNOD
O F

G L A S G O W and A I R,

At GLASGOW, the 7th of *April*, 1747.

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G L A S G O W,

Printed by R. URIE and COMPANY,
For J. BARRY, Bookseller, above the Cross.

MDCCLVII.

[Price Six Pence.]



ACTS vi. 4.

But we will give ourselves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.

Reverend Fathers and Brethren,

THESE Words will appear, I hope, the more proper for a Subject of Discourse on this Occasion, that they contain the very same Resolution on the Part of these first Ministers of the New-Testament Church, that we all professed, and with great Solemnity too, when we first took upon us the sacred Character, in which we now appear. The practical Language of what was then transacted by us, was plainly this, *We will give ourselves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.* A noble Resolution! And if we were truly sincere when we thus

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resolved,

resolved, and our own Minds are still bearing us this Testimony, that we have nothing so much at Heart, as steadily to pursue the Purposes of such a Resolution, it will not be disagreeable to be again put in Mind of what was then our deliberate Choice.

We have here the two most essential Parts of our Ministerial Work, set before us in the Example of the holy Apostles, *viz.* Prayer and Preaching. The original Word in the Text is so very emphatic and significant, that I know no one Word in our Language that can fully express the Meaning of it; and therefore our Translators have made Use of several: *We will give ourselves continually to, &c.* or, *we will with all possible Intensity of Mind, with a true Zeal, with Constancy and Perseverance, apply ourselves to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.*

These two holy Exercises, I shall endeavour to consider a little in the Order in which they ly.

Prayer is an Exercise so strongly recommended to us, not only by the clearest Scripture

ture Revelation, but also by the very Reason of our own Minds, that did we not live in an Age extremely corrupt and degenerate, we should never hear either the *Reasonableness* or the *Necessity* of it disputed. But when Men are sunk so low, *as not to like to retain God in their Knowledge*, it is no Wonder that a holy God gives them up to a *reprobate Mind*; i. e. to a Mind stupid and void of Judgment. This was the awful but just Conduct of divine Providence with those of old, who *held the Truth in Unrighteousness*: And this, I believe, is the truest Way of accounting for the monstrous Infidelity of latter Times.

It would be unnecessary, and indeed not so pertinent, before such an Audience as this, to go about to open up the Nature and Necessity of Prayer: It may suffice at present, to remind myself and you of a few of the many great and happy Effects that a devout Temper will have upon us.

The more we give ourselves to Prayer and Devotion, the firmer and deeper will our Conviction be both of the Truth and

A devout Temper will make our Belief of the Truth and Excellency of Religion firm and stable.

divine

divine Excellency of that holy Religion of which we are Ministers: We shall be able both to judge and to speak honourably of it, not only because the speculative Arguments for it are strong, and to an ingenuous Mind irresistible, but especially, because we even feel this Gospel to be the *Power of God unto Salvation*. It is in vain to dispute against the Reality of what we feel, as much in vain as to object against the Truth of what we daily see with our Eyes, and hear with our Ears, when the Body is in a right State of Health: For, by a devout Intercourse, and growing Acquaintance with the great Things of Religion, the very Temper of our Spirits will be gradually formed into a certain Resemblance to the divine Nature: And thus we shall, at once, find both our *Minds* satisfied, and our *Hearts* captivated.

Will fortify the Mind against slavish Fear.

Another great Advantage arising from the habitual Exercise of Prayer, is this, That it wonderfully fortifies against every Fear, and supports under every Suffering. As Ministers, we are engaged in a Cause that must meet

meet with Opposition, even the greatest Opposition in the World. *The God of this World, the Lusts of Men, and the Deceitfulness of Sin,* are all in Alliance against us. Their Power is great, and their Cunning and Vigilance as great. *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkeness of this World;* and therefore we had need *put on the whole Armour of God;* our Loins must be girt about with *Truth;* and we must have on the *Breast-plate of Righteousness,* the *Shield of Faith,* the *Helmet of Salvation,* and the *Sword of the Spirit.* But all these several Pieces of Armour, however excellent and necessary in themselves, will never prove effectual, either for offensive or defensive Purposes, unless assisted by Prayer; and therefore the Apostle tells us, that besides our being thus armed, we must be *praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit,* and *watching thereunto with all Perseverance.* And if we are thus fervent and persevering in Prayer, the most formidable Appearances need not
move

move us ; we shall still hear, as it were, a Voice behind us, whispering these most encouraging Words to us ; *Fear not, for I am with thee ; be not discouraged, for I am thy God : I will strengthen, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness.*

Is perfectly
suitable
to our
Character.

We are honoured with the Title of *Ambassadors for Christ*. We are sent upon an Embassy infinitely glorious and important ; to treat of a Peace between Heaven and Earth ; a Reconciliation between the great Majesty of the Universe and his rebellious Subjects. Now two Things amongst others are absolutely necessary in an Ambassador. *First*, That there be nothing mean, sordid or abject in his Behaviour ; this would expose his Character to great Contempt. And, *Secondly*, He must keep a close and faithful Correspondence with his own Court. Now the Parallel in our Case holds exactly in both these Respects ; there must be nothing in our Conduct that would lessen or disgrace our Character ; and we must be sure to keep a constant Correspondence with the Court of
Hea-

Heaven: which Correspondence, you know, is chiefly kept up by Prayer and Supplication.

A devout Temper of Soul, daily cultivated, will have a very happy, and even a sensible Influence upon our publick Appearances; I mean our publick Discourses to our People. Discourses which, in the Composition, are, as it were, interlin'd with Prayer, will be both deliver'd by *Us*, and heard by our *People*, in quite a different Manner from what they would be otherwise. There is indeed a Difference between one Man and another; yea, between a Man and himself at different Times; which, I doubt not, we have all found true in Experience. Such is the Mechanism of our present Frame, that the natural Spirits must rise and fall, ebb and flow; and our not adverting to this has, I believe, sometimes led even good Men into considerable Mistakes: But, notwithstanding the Weaknesses arising from bodily Constitution (which are to be considered as a part of our Trial during our present State) it is most certain, that when

Will have
a happy
Influence
upon our
publick
Performances.

the Heart is kept habitually warm by Prayer and Meditation, our publick Performances will have a Life and Spirit in them, which all the Oratory in the World, natural or artificial, could not give them. And this will be found to be of great Advantage both to Speaker and Hearer, without laying Stress upon the meer Stirrings of Passion.

Is the true
Way of
improving
Solitude.

Let me observe to you, that there is one Circumstance in our Lot, which is very much denied to most other Orders of Men : We are obliged by our very Profession and Station in Life, to be much alone : We cannot live always in a Croud ; the Decencies of Life forbid it ; and should any of us be of such an unhappy Turn of Mind as not to be happy but in Company, we must needs give great Offence to the World. Let us all therefore adore both the Wisdom and Goodness of God, in assigning us such a Province, as, if rightly improved, will be attended with singular Advantages. Are we then obliged to pass much of our Time in a Retirement from the World, we will not, sure, look upon our solitary Hours, as meer Voids, and
empty

empty Spaces of Life; but as so much precious Time, to be devoted to, and filled up with, the noble Exercises of Reading, Prayer and Meditation. They are greatly to be pitied, who have not Discernment enough, to know the true and best way of improving Solitude, which is devoutly to converse with the glorious Author of all Things, in the various Appearances both of Providence and Grace. In Solitude we recollect ourselves, call in our straying Thoughts, and chide ourselves into a greater Accuracy and Circumspection of Behaviour. If we know ourselves, as we ought, we shall often have Reason to complain, as did once an excellent Person, that we seldom bring back the same good Temper that we carried abroad with us. Unnecessary Converse with the World, the Follies and Trifles of it, will be apt to sullie our Minds, and indispose them for better Exercises. It is therefore absolutely necessary, in order to our perfect Establishment in the Truth, and our relishing those divine Pleasures that arise from it, that we as often as possible, turn our back upon the

World, retire into ourselves, and converse with those Things that are not the Objects of Sense.

And when this comes once to be our delightful Habit, we shall upon much higher Grounds, than the famous *Roman*, be able to say, *We are never less alone, than when alone, and never better employed than when we have nothing to do.*

Let us all therefore endeavour to be still more acquainted with, and to act still more under the Influence of a devout and praying Spirit. Ignorant, profane and debauched Men may talk and rant as they will; but Wisdom will always be justified of her Children.

One of the most elegant and polite Writers of this, or perhaps any Age, has most justly observed, that a State of Temperance, Sobriety and Justice without Devotion, is a cold, lifeless and insipid Condition of Virtue; and is rather to be stiled Philosophy, than Religion. Devotion opens the Mind to great Conceptions, &c. Thus speaks that
most

most celebrated Writer; whose Works are in every one's Hands.

Let me yet remind my Reverend and Learned Audience, of a Passage which we meet with in these golden Verses commonly ascribed to *Pythagoras*. The Verse I have particularly in my Thoughts at present, is that about Prayer; where the Author, even a Heathen, tells us, that if we would succeed in any Business or Enterprize whatsoever, we must begin with Prayer,

——— ἄλλ' ἔρχεν ἐπ' ἔργον
Θεοῖσιν ἠπενξάμενος τελέσαι.

Whatever you undertake, first pray to the Gods that they may give you Success in it. Strange Language, you will say, from a Heathen! But if the Text surprizes, the Commentary by another Heathen, viz. *Hierocles*, will much more surprize. That wonderful Man asserts, and by a noble way of Reasoning doth indeed prove, that without Prayer to God, the most shining Virtue is but *αθεος ἀρετή*, an atheistical Virtue, or a Virtue that hath nothing of God in it. —

If

If we will not then learn from Christ and his Apostles, let us go to the School of a Heathen Philosopher, and learn the true Notion of Virtue and good Morals. It is not our being sober, just, civil and obliging, that will entitle us to the Character of virtuous Men, but we must also be devout, piously disposed towards God, and learn in all our Ways to acknowledge him, making Prayer our habitual and familiar Exercise: otherwise you see that according to the Doctrine of a Heathen Philosopher, the most celebrated Virtue, with all its boasted Beauty, is but a kind of practical Atheism.— Blush then, all you Christian Heathens, all you prayerless Christians! and tremble at the Thought, that there is one Day to rise up in Judgment against you, a certain Heathen Philosopher, who will condemn you, even upon the Principles of sober Reason!

Let it therefore no longer remain a Doubt with any, whether Prayer, or a prevailing Regard to God in the Heart, be a necessary Ingredient in all Religion: most certainly it is! A sincere Piety in the Heart is the very

Basis

Basis upon which all that can be called Religion must stand. The inward Byass of the Heart towards God must regulate and direct all the Motions of the Life. And I think this Truth as capable of Demonstration, as any moral Truth in the World can be. So you see the best and most considerate of the Heathens themselves thought.

Let us all, therefore, Ministers and People, especially us Ministers, give ourselves continually to Prayer. When I speak of Prayer, I do not mean only certain outward Forms of Devotion: in these we may abound, and know little of the Devotion of the Heart; but I mean that Devotion which is the native Issue of a Heart, upon which the Holy Spirit is daily exerting his renewing Influences; and when we are thus effectually subdued to God, and *every Thought in us is brought into Captivity to the Obedience of Jesus Christ*; then our Work will become our Delight. Vital Religion, having once got the Command of the Heart, will give Laws to the whole Life; and will give us such an inward Strength of Soul as will render us superior

perior to every Difficulty, every Discouragement. We shall go on from Strength to Strength, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know that our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. But if we should be so weak and unhappy as to drudge on always in the lowest Form of Religion ourselves, it is very likely, that the best Things we can say, not coming from the Heart, will fall short of the Hearts of those who hear us. But I hope much better Things of you, my Reverend Brethren, Things that accompany Salvation, tho' I thus speak.

Give me leave to recommend to you all a true masculine, unaffected Piety, from this particular Advantage of it, that it is the strongest Fence that can be, to a Man's moral Character. We need never be over anxious about our Character; if it be good it will not be easily stolen from us. Let us faithfully follow the noble Example of the Apostles in our Text; and we may confidently leave our Reputation to his Care, to whom we are daily committing our Souls.

— If

—If the World shall observe, that we are exceeding fond of being privileged Persons, fond of political Sanctions, and ecclesiastic Laws, for the Security of our Characters, I am much afraid, they will be ready to say, that it seems we have too much need of them all: We may assure ourselves, that tho' every Minister and Preacher had a Guard of twenty Acts of——, the World will get at us, unless we are wise enough to guard ourselves. But who shall harm us, if we are Followers of that which is good, and have a Conversation such as becomes the Gospel? The best of Men may be reproached, but conscious Innocence will be always *murus abeneus*.

I am now come to the *second* Part of my Subject. We have said, with the Apostles, That we will give ourselves both to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word, or the preaching of the Gospel: And who is sufficient for these Things? I think I may freely say, that a better Preparation we cannot have for the *latter*, than to be well acquainted

quainted with the *former* of these two Exercises. A well-disposed Mind, habitually lifting up itself in Prayer to God, must needs take a peculiar Pleasure in explaining and recommending to others those divine Truths, the Effects of which it feels on itself. And this most important Question will be frequently returning to our most serious Thoughts, What shall we do to win Souls?

The Subject before me, you see, is large; and to handle it at any length would require a great deal of more Time than I can reasonably take at present; and therefore I shall confine myself to a few Observations.

It is the
Gospel of
Christ we
are to
preach.

In the *first* Place, then, While we give ourselves to this Ministry of the Word, we will never, sure, forget our Character and our Business so far, as not to keep continually in mind, that it is the Gospel of Christ we are called to preach. While others are active and zealous in a most unreasonable Cause, let not us be cold and cowardly in promoting the Interest of the best Cause in the World. We cannot but know that Jesus Christ is the Soul that
animates

animates both Testaments, the Old and the New. And the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, who knew perfectly well both what and how he ought to preach, determined to know nothing among the *Corinthians*, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Did he think it would either have been honest or honourable, to drop the peculiar Doctrines of Christ? Had he so poor a Taste, and so little Judgment, as, instead of the Gospel of Salvation, to entertain a sinful World with the Flourishes of Rhetoric, and Pomp of Words? No, he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, as knowing it to be the Power of God unto Salvation. He was too wise, and too good a Man, to harangue Sinners with the Wisdom of Words. And what a mighty Reason does he give for it? *Lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none Effect*. Words that ought to be ever sounding in our Ears, and deeply affecting to our Hearts.—In this Cross of Christ he glories; and, by a Virtue derived from it, is able to trample upon all the Pride and Glory of this little World. He knew, and was persuaded,

that, notwithstanding all the Prejudices of of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the Cross of Christ would be seen to be the greatest Instance, both of the Wisdom and Power of God, that ever the World saw. Had we all the Oratory of *Cicero* or *Demosthenes*, or even the more flowing Eloquence of *Nestor*, we could but please the Ears, and gratify the Fancies of Sinners. That powerful Eloquence, that can charm, so as to soften and subdue the Heart, must come from the Cross of Christ. Let us never therefore shew ourselves so mean, and so ignorant, as to think lightly of that Method of Salvation, which infinite Wisdom, and infinite Mercy, have found out for restoring an apostate World to the Favour of God.

The Nature and Effects of the Religion of Jesus, when truly practised.

Let us, in the *next* Place, take a short Survey of the Religion of Jesus Christ. And upon a just and impartial View of it, we shall find it equally calculated to introduce a *temporal* and an *eternal* Happiness. This will appear evident, if we consider the Nature and Extent of its Laws. There have been several very eminent Men, not only in the

the *Christian*, but also the *Heathen* World, whose Names will always be transmitted with Honour to future Ages; I mean those particularly, who, with a generous Zeal, have exerted themselves for the public Good. But the wisest Statesmen that ever appeared, were never able to form a Plan for establishing a *real* public Good; for this Reason, That they were never able to enact Laws, that could direct the chief Springs of human Conduct, *i. e.* the Will and the Affections. Laws of this Sort were above the Reach of all political Wisdom. But when the great *Messiah*, a Reformer sent from God, began to appear, he went another way to Work; he laid the Axe to the Root. His Laws, which are all holy, just, and good, are levelled directly at the Heart: And when once the Heart is won, the overt Acts of the Life must follow. Let real Religion preside in the Heart, and it will soon clear the Life of what is hurtful and noxious. Let a Family, for Example, be regulated in the whole of their Conduct by the sacred Laws of the Gospel, how amiable a Family will

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will it appear? Should a whole Parish submit to the Laws of Christ, every Soul in it *denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World*, what a Society would it appear? Would not all around it take Notice, that *they had been with Jesus, and had all out of his Fulness received, and Grace for Grace?* We may still enlarge the Supposition, and imagine a whole Kingdom, or Republic, thus converted to *Christianity*; every Heart in it flaming with the most sincere and ardent Love to the blessed God, and the holy Jesus; and, in consequence of this heavenly Principle ruling in the Heart, all the Members of this happy Community studiously pursuing the private Happiness of one another; would not such a Kingdom, such a Republic, become the Envy, or rather the Glory, of the whole Earth?—Is it not evident, then, that it is Religion, true and undefiled Religion, that exalts a Nation; and that Sin is indeed the Reproach, the Scandal, the Misery, of any People?—When shall those happy Days come, when all

all the Kingdoms of this World, shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ?—Sure, this Heaven-born Religion of Jesus is not always to ly in Obscurity, and be looked upon by Men, as having no Beauty or Comeliness, that it should be desired. There is certainly a Day coming, even during this militant State, when it will lift up its Head, and like its divine Author, triumph gloriously over all the Opposition of Earth and Hell. *Even so, come Lord Jesus!*

But the World at present, even that part of it that enjoys the greatest Advantages for Knowledge and Happiness, is far from being truly reformed : But what is the Reason? Christ himself has told us, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have Life.* Is the Sufficiency of the Physician to be called in Question, because the Patients are generally so infatuated, that they despise and reject, instead of applying, the best Remedies in the World?

Would we promise ourselves Success in our Labours, and see the the Pleasure of the Lord prosper in our Hands, we must begin

True Religion must begin in the Heart.

as-Christ and his Laws do; that is to say, we must make our first Attacks upon the Heart; for this is the impure Fountain, whence all the Streams of Wickedness in the Life do flow: This is to make the Tree good; and then good Fruit need not be despaired of: But all our Culture, in order to good Fruit will be lost, while the Tree continues corrupt. Here we cannot mistake our Way, if we take the Scriptures of Truth for our Guide. Let us therefore be often putting People in mind of the Necessity of being made new Creatures; of being born again; of being transformed by the renewing of their Minds.—This is the plain Stile of Scripture; and he that runs may read. We must be often urging upon People, *Ezek. xviii. 31.* compared with *Chap. xxxvi. 26.* where they will see the most important of all Duties enjoined, and the greatest possible Encouragement given them to set about it. It is farther to be observed, that as the first Beginnings of Religion in the Soul are to be ascribed to a divine Energy, so it must be carried on in all the progressive Steps of it

it by the same almighty Influence. The natural Life is maintained by continual Supplies from the Heart; in like manner, the spiritual Life can be maintained only by the renewed Supplies of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.—We must be often recommending moral Virtue; as essential to the Religion of Jesus Christ, so essential, that we are not *Christians* without it; but let us always do it Justice; let it never suffer by false Representations. It is Pity now, under the Gospel Dispensation, it should be set out to the World in the poor Rags of *Heathenism*; let us dress it always in Evangelic Apparel, and it will appear a charming Thing indeed. These are a few Hints; your Time will not allow me, nor is it necessary, to condescend upon many Particulars before those of whom, I hope, I shall always be ready to learn.

To excite our Diligence, and a true Zeal in preaching the Gospel, we are always to remember, that Men are now in a State of Apostasy from God, *being alienated, and Enemies in their Minds by wicked Works*; our Business, therefore, is to *beseech them in*

The present Condition of Mankind to be well attended to.

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Christ's

Christ's Stead, to be reconciled unto God.
 And can we be employed in more important or more honourable Work? Can there be a greater Instance of true Wisdom than to win Souls? Is it not glorious to cause an universal Joy among the Inhabitants of the upper World, by ministring successfully to those who shall be Heirs of Salvation? Doth the whole World lie in Wickedness, and consequently in Misery? and shall we not exert all our Powers, and employ all our Talents for their Rescue? What generous Mind would not bestir itself for restoring even civil Liberty? How much more ought we to be industrious and indefatigable to bring about that Liberty with which the Son makes all the Children of God free? Do we not feel in our Breasts the Affections of Generosity, Benevolence and Goodness; and have we not a large Theatre on which to display these Affections? Is not the World a great Hospital, filled with Invalids of all Sorts? And shall we daily see the sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf, yea the mad and the distracted, and not feel our Breasts heave with

with Compassion? While so many, all around us, are ready to perish, shall the Blessing of none of them come upon us? shall we cause no one Heart to sing for Joy? God forbid! I hope we shall not be so unprofitable Servants. — Such a View of Things as I have been giving, may seem discouraging; and make us all cry out, Who is sufficient for these Things! But our great Lord is so very good a Master, that he sends none a Warfare on their own Charges; as our Day is so shall our Strength be; and that tho' weak in ourselves we shall be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might. When Christ is giving his last Commission to his Apostles, and going to return to *his Father and their Father, to his God and their God*; he tells them for their Encouragement, that *all Power in Heaven and in Earth was given unto him*; Go ye therefore, saith he, *and teach all Nations, &c. q. d. I send you forth*, indeed, *as Sheep in the midst of Wolves*; I send you forth a small Number of mean Men, and that upon the most arduous and desperate-like Undertaking that ever Mortals

were concern'd in: I send you to combat the whole Force of the God of this World, and to destroy his Empire: but let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; for I am with you, and with all your faithful Successors, even to the End of the World.

Let me now conclude with a few Reflections relating to our moral Conduct.

The Description which some of the best of the Ancients gave of an Orator, was this, *Vir bonus dicendi peritus*, i. e. a good Man that can speak well; not *dicendi peritus* only, but *Vir bonus*: and the famous Professor of Oratory, *Quintilian*, bestows a whole Chapter of his excellent Book upon this very Subject, that *If we would be good Orators, we must be good Men*. Let us not be affronted so far as to have these Heathens coming in as Evidences against us in the great Day of Accounts. One of the best Commentaries our People can have upon the Doctrine we deliver to them, will be our own Morals. Let our own Christian Life serve as a daily Illustration of the sacred Truths we preach
to

to them from the Pulpit. It is but a poor Character that an eminent Divine gives of some of the Clergy of his Acquaintance; when they are in the Pulpit, saith he, it is pity they should ever go out of it; and when they are out of it, it is as great Pity they should ever enter it.

There is one particular Immorality, which is very incident to Men of our Station, and which we ought to guard much against; and that is, Covetousness and Worldly-mindedness. This is a Vice of a very sly and insinuating Nature. We may be highly criminal this way, and yet wear the Character of pious and orthodox. But let us not deceive ourselves, God is not mocked. An inspired Apostle has drawn this Immorality in very just and lively Colours, in a Letter that he writes to a Minister, plainly supposing that even Men of this Character may be guilty this way; *1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. They that will be rich, fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition; for the Love of Money is the Root of*

of all Evil; which while some coveted after,
they have erred from the Faith; and pierced
themselves through with many Sorrows: and
 then he adds, to shew how detestable such
 a Vice was in a Minister of the Gospel, *but*
thou, O Man of God, flee these Things. Let
 us therefore, through Grace, study in every
 Respect to live up to the Dignity and Purity
 of our Office; that we may adorn the Doc-
 trine of God our Saviour in all Things.
 How expressly and severely does the Apostle
 speak against Ministers being Lovers of fil-
 thy Lucre? and in how many Instances has
 Providence, even in our own Time, remark-
 ably frowned upon this sordid Disposition in
 Ministers? It is indeed very agreeable to
 see Men of our Station (such as some of us
 may see every Day) prosperous and flourish-
 ing in their worldly Circumstances, while
 they are as remarkable for an exemplary Cha-
 rity and Hospitality. But O, what an In-
 consistency, to *preach Christ crucified*, and,
 at the same Time, to *mind earthly Things!*
 which the Apostle expressly declares to be
 one of those Characters that are *Enemies to*
the Cross of Christ.

To

To conclude ; let us all endeavour so to live, that we may be able, with a holy Confidence, to take our last leave of those amongst whom we have laboured, in these Words of the Apostle, *Philip. 4. 9. Those Things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do ; and the God of Peace shall be with you : Or in these other Words, 1 Thess. 2. 10. Ye are Witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you who believe.* We shall in that Case, it is to be hoped, be able also every one of us to say, and that with a most triumphant Joy ; *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness ; which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give unto me at that Day.*

It is usual at the Conclusion of such Discourses to make some short Address to the People. All I have to say that way is, that both Ministers and People are in a little to appear before the righteous Judge of the World ; by whom our eternal State is to be deter-

determined. Ministers are called to watch for your Souls, as they that must give Account; and how much does it concern you who are Hearers, so to attend upon the Ministry of the Word, as that we may be able to give up our Account with Joy and not with Grief? — Often realize to yourselves the Solemnities of that great Day, in which Christ and his Gospel will appear to you in a very different Light from what they do at present. — The Words of Christ in our Mouths now appear but as idle Tales to most of you, but that Day will greatly undeceive you! — Faithful Ministers, it is to be hoped, will have some at least to be their Joy and Crown of rejoicing in that Day of the Lord; but the Account they will have to give of many will be with Grief. — We cannot now persuade Men to pray to him who is both able and willing to save them; but in the great and terrible Day of the Lord they will be forced to pray to Deities as hard and stupid as their own Hearts are now, *viz.* the Rocks and the Mountains. Read, and read often with true Attention, Rev. 6. 15, 16, 17.

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